

Wycombe W. 3, Bedford 0

THEIR third and last friendly gave Wycombe Wanderers a welcome first taste of victory on the eve of the new season.

A defeat at Waterlooville, a draw with Altrincham, and now a win over Southern League Bedford at Loakes Park on Tuesday night, make Wanderers all-square from the series of build-up matches.

It also shows the gradual yet clear, improvement as the beginnings of the new squad are moulded. And Bedford would vouch for the apparent potential of Wycombe's playing pool.

After a well-balanced opening, the Isthmian champions began to impress the full load of their combined midfield talents on the game.

Barry Davies snapped tenaciously throughout, and Alan Gane — half time substitute for the quiet Bernie Bremer — also kept the visitors guessing. Meanwhile Larry Pritchard took the chance to work himself back into the swing of things after a holiday in Greece.

Upfront the menace of the Keith Searle-Mick Holifield partnership became obvious long before the former opened the scoring.

Holifield foraged without much luck and netted his second disallowed goal in as many games when pulled up for offside by Football League referee Gordon Kew (Amersham), in the 33rd minute.

Once they had settled, Wanderers developed their game quickly. They worked many a fluid move, and were duly rewarded after 41 minutes by a fine goal starting Keith Searle's account for the season.

A mistake from former Watford defender Brian Garvie, offered Keith a slim but distinct opening, which he accepted by banging the ball home, his shot slicing off a post.

Wanderers moved two up through a disputed penalty in the 50th minute. Questions may have been raised, but Larry Pritchard supplied the only true answer when aiming the spot kick low, to the left, and safely into goal.

A magical third, netted by Searle, six minutes later left the Southern Leaguers awry. With a directness not always associated with Wanderers' ace marksman in the past, he quickly spied out a chance on the edge of the box and crashed the ball goalwards before Bedford's defence could fully cover.

Finding fresh heart from a solid defensive performance by Garvie—making up for his earlier error—Bedford pushed back in forlorn search of a reply before the final whistle.

The victory was complete however, with enough good thinking and slick moving from the champions for supporters to feel happy with the state of things as final preparations are made for the kick off against Dulwich Hamlet tomorrow.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell (sub. K. O'Brien, half-time); P. Birdseye, D. Gamblin, G. Olsen, D. Bullock, B. Davies, B. Bremer (sub. A. Gane, half-time), L. Pritchard, K. Searle, M. Holifield, R. Williams (sub. J. Hutchinson, 57 mins.).

BEDFORD: Alexander; Skinn, Cooley, Lloyd, Garvie, Boyd, Campbell, Bailey, Sorbie, Scurr, Horrey. Subs. Merry, Sprigin, O'Keith, McCabe.

Referee: Mr. G. Kew (Amersham).
Half-time: 1-0. Goalscorers:
Wycombe — Searle 2 (41, 56),
Pritchard (50 pen).